

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



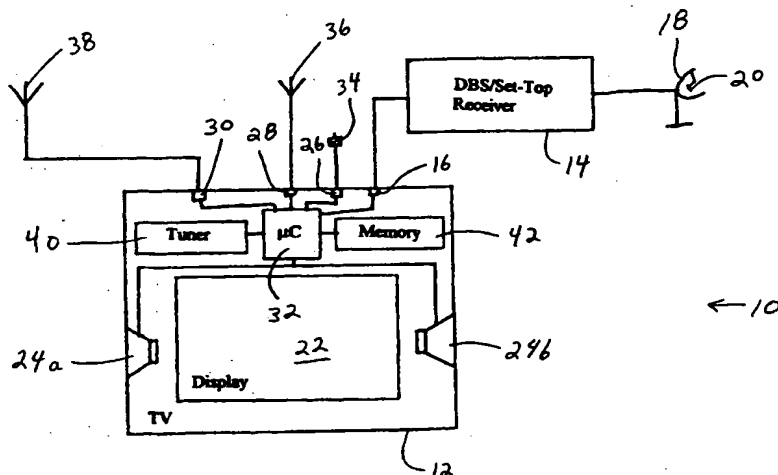
(43) International Publication Date
25 January 2001 (25.01.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/06771 A1

- (51) International Patent Classification⁷: H04N 5/445, 5/00
- (21) International Application Number: PCT/US00/17374
- (22) International Filing Date: 23 June 2000 (23.06.2000)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data:
60/144,654 16 July 1999 (16.07.1999) US
- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): THOMSON LICENSING S.A. [FR/FR]; 46, quai Alphonse Le Gallo, F-92648 Boulogne Cedex (FR).
- (72) Inventors; and
- (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): JOHNSON, Gene, Harlow [US/US]; 14370 Whisper Wind Drive, Carmel, IN 46250-4607 (US). MAYER, Matthew, Thomas [US/US]; 9340A Kungshold Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46250 (US). KLOPFENSTEIN, Scott, Edward [US/US]; 9304-F Viking Hills Court, Indianapolis, IN 46250 (US). DINWIDDIE, Aaron, Hal [US/US]; 12466 Trophy Drive, Fishers, IN 46038 (US).
- (74) Agents: TRIPOLI, Joseph, S. et al.; Thomson Multimedia Licensing Inc., P.O. Box 5312, 2 Independence Way, Princeton, NJ 08540 (US).
- (81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.
- (84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
- Published:
— With international search report.
- For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PERFORMING A CHANNEL SEARCH IN A TELEVISION



(57) Abstract: A television, such as an HDTV receiver, includes a plurality of signal inputs each of which is adapted to receive television signals comprising a plurality of channels and communicate the received television signals to a processor/tuner for selection of the various channels by a user for viewing on a display of the television. A channel search routine for the detection of channels in the television signal is accomplished on the currently designated signal input rather than on all signal inputs of the television. The channels detected during the search of the currently designated signal input are included in a channel list that is stored in memory of the television. A GUI is preferably used to initiate the channel search and is capable of displaying the detected channels relating to the currently selected signal input. Channel lists for each signal input are updated as the channels are detected. A complete channel list may be maintained for all signal inputs as well as individual channel lists for each signal input.

WO 01/06771 A1

perform a cable/antenna detection algorithm. This as well reduces the amount of time necessary to perform the channel search.

According to another aspect of the present invention, the present channel search may use information that was found during a last full channel search or
5 information that was entered by the user.

In another form, a channel search program/routine preferably of a graphical user interface (GUI) e.g., a television programming or set-up menu, is adapted to allow the user to accomplish a channel search on only the currently selected signal input and/or enter information regarding the existence of various channels.

10 The GUI can be combined with other GUI functions of a similar nature, i.e. channel information, rather than to have the user navigate through several menu options.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The above-mentioned and other features and advantages of this invention,
15 and the manner of attaining them, will become more apparent and the invention will be better understood by reference to the following description of an embodiment of the invention taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, wherein:

Fig. 1 depicts a multimedia system adapted to receive and utilize digital
20 and analog television signals, as well as perform various television channel searches and storage of channel lists for various inputs.

Corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding parts throughout the several views. The exemplification set out herein illustrates a preferred embodiment of the invention, and such exemplification is not to be
25 construed as limiting the scope of the invention in any manner.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring now to the drawings and, more particularly to Fig. 1, there is shown a simplified, functional block diagram of a multimedia system 10.

Multimedia system 10 may include television ("TV") or monitor 12 and DBS
30 and/or set-top box receiver 14. DBS receiver 14 is in communication with signal input 16 of TV 12 via a communication line as is known in the art. DBS (Direct

Broadcast System) receiver 14 is in communication with dish (or antenna) 18 via a communication line as is also known in the art. Dish 18 receives digital multimedia and/or data signals, e.g. television, music and/or internet signals (hereinafter collectively "television signals"), that are focused onto and received by feedhorn/LNA (Low Noise Amplifier) unit 20. Feedhorn/LNA unit 20 typically receives and slightly amplifies the received television signals and transmits the amplified television signals to DBS receiver 14 for processing.

TV 12 includes image display or viewing area 22 and speakers 24a and 24b. In addition to signal input 16, TV 12 also includes signal inputs 26, 28, and 30. Signal inputs 16, 26, 28, and 30 are typically RF type signal inputs but may be any type of signal input such as RF and S-video. Additionally, while TV 12 is shown with four signal inputs, it should be understood that the number of signal inputs may vary from two to as many as practical. As depicted in Fig. 1, signal input 26 is signified as coupled with a CATV or cable system via cable or communication input line 34. TV 12 is shown coupled to antenna or aerial 36 via a communication input line with signal input 28. Likewise, antenna or aerial 38 is coupled to TV 12 via a communication input line. Antennas 36 and 38 are designed to receive off-air or terrestrially broadcast television signals which may be either digital or analog television signals. As such, antennas 36 and 38 are generally adjustable either manually or automatically. While antennas 36 and 38 are shown coupled to signal inputs 28 and 30 respectively, signal input 26 is shown coupled to CATV, and signal input 16 is shown coupled to DBS 14, it should be understood that generally each signal input can accept any input device, i.e. antenna, CATV, DBS or the like. Thus what is shown in Fig. 1 is for illustrative purposes only.

Signal inputs 16, 26, 28 and 30 are fed into microcontroller unit (" μ C") 32 such that television signals from any signal input may be selected for discriminating or tuning the various channels and receiving any data signals by tuner or selector 40 as is known in the art. Tuner 40 is in communication with μ C unit 32 such that analog and digital television signals received from either antenna 36 or 38, CATV 34, or dish 18 are received and processed by μ C unit

32 as is known in the art. In addition to other functions as are known in the art, μ C unit 32 provides control and/or implementation of the various software programs/routines and is in communication with various components in accordance with the various aspects of the present invention, such as memory 42, e.g. EEPROM, RAM, ROM, display 22, and speakers 24a and 24b for providing audio output for the user.

Additionally, μ C unit 32 includes the ability to generate, process, and display OSD information/data on display 22. The OSD information/data may be part of a received television signal or may be generated internally. Such OSD information may include channel number, time, signal strength, on-screen electronic program guides (EPGs), internet data, pop-up windows, on-screen electronic programming menus, and the like. Microcontroller unit 32 also runs various software necessary to process and/or utilize the incoming digital signals as is known in the art and additionally as provided herein.

It should be understood that μ C unit 32 by itself or along with tuner 40 and memory 42 form a module capable of implementing the present invention. This module may be totally separate (discrete module) or may incorporate existing constituents of the various components (virtual module). In this manner, the module may be incorporated into TV 12, DBS/Set-Top Receiver Unit 14, or any other digital component capable of receiving and/or utilizing digital television signals.

As is typical of televisions, TV 12 is able to process only television signals from one signal input or signal reception medium, i.e. antenna, cable or satellite dish. The choice of which signal input to process and thus the channels to watch is determined by the user typically through input from a remote (not shown) as is known in the art. Thus, the selection of which signal input 16, 26, 28 or 30 to have TV 12 process and allow the various channels to be viewed on display 22 is chosen by the user.

In accordance with the present invention, upon initiation of a channel search in order to detect what channels are being broadcast in the television signal, the channel search routine tries to detect channels only from the currently

selected signal input of signal inputs 16, 26, 28, and 30. Upon detection of a channel on which information is being broadcasted, a channel list stored in memory 42 is updated to include the detected channel for the particular signal input. The channel search may utilize channel information that was determined during a last channel search for the particular signal input. Alternatively or additionally, the channel search may utilize channel information that was entered by the user. The channel list preferably includes a label or identifier for each active channel detected which relates the detected channel to the particular signal input being scanned. Thus, when a user is viewing channels from a selected signal input, only those channels that were detected from the selected signal input are displayable.

In order to further reduce the time necessary to perform channel detection, the various signal inputs 16, 26, 28, and 30 may accept only certain signal sources. For example, signal input 16 may only accept DBS/Set-top box type television signals and thus only those channels that are typical of DBS/Set-top box signals. Signal inputs 28 and 30 may accept only terrestrial or off-air television signals (VHF/UHF) that only carry characteristics channels, while signal input 26 may accept only cable television signals which carry only a certain range of channels. Preferably, television 12 includes a full channel search routine that detects all available channels from all signal inputs 16, 26, 28, and 30, in order to establish a baseline channel list if necessary.

It is not necessary for television 12 to perform a channel search/scan on television signals from every signal input. As such, the present invention preferably performs the channel detection/search/scan only on those signal inputs that are coupled to antennas that are receiving off-air or terrestrial television signals, and those signal inputs that are coupled to CATV systems for receiving cable TV signals. At a minimum, the present invention may be applied only to those signal inputs that are coupled to antennas. In Fig. 1, this would be signal inputs 28 and 30 which are coupled to antennas 36 and 38 respectively, and signal input 26 which is coupled to a CATV system. It should be understood that while a DBS receiver 14 is shown coupled to television 12 via signal input

16, the present channel search is not performed on this set of television signals, since the DBS receiver 14 performs this function. This would also be true of a VCR or like device (not shown) that would be coupled to a signal input.

5 Generally, the present channel search is performed on the signal inputs coupled to the antennas. As such this would eliminate a cable/air detection routine as performed in the prior art thereby reducing the time necessary to perform the channel search function.

10 Upon selection of a channel scan by the user, preferably from within a screen of a GUI, a channel search is started on the channels characteristic of the signal input. A next frequency starting from a chosen frequency is scanned for detection of a usable signal. If there is not a next frequency, the routine is done. When a next frequency is encountered, it is determined whether there is a usable signal on the frequency/channel. Usable may be determined by applying a threshold signal strength for the incoming signal to overcome or other parameter
15 or set of parameters. For each incoming frequency/channel that does not meet threshold signal strength requirements or otherwise, the channel may be removed from the channel list and a next frequency is determined. A continuous non-receipt of usable channels results in a loop until there are no more next frequencies available. For each incoming frequency/channel that does meet
20 threshold signal strength requirements or otherwise, the channel is added to the channel list, preferably with an identifier indicating which signal input it is from. The process repeats until there is no next frequency.

25 While this invention has been described as having a preferred design, the present invention can be further modified within the spirit and scope of this disclosure. This application is therefore intended to cover any variations, uses, of adaptations of the invention using its general principles. Further, this application is intended to cover such departures from the present disclosure as come within known or customary practice in the art to which this invention
30 pertains and which fall within the limits of the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In a video processing apparatus having at least two video inputs and coupled to a display device, a method of performing a channel search comprising:
 - determining a currently selected video input of the at least two video
 - 5 inputs;
 - detecting available channels from various possible channels on only the currently selected video input; and
 - updating a channel list of channels available for the currently selected video input.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein detecting available channels comprises detecting only digital channels.
3. The method of claim 1, further including after determining a currently selected video input:
 - utilizing information generated from a previous full channel search
 - 15 regarding whether a video input is coupled to a cable video signal source or an antenna video signal source in order to skip a cable/air detection routine.
4. The method of claim 1, further including after determining a currently selected video input:
 - utilizing information entered by a user regarding whether a video input is
 - 20 coupled to a cable video signal source or an antenna video signal source in order to skip a cable/air detection routine.
5. A video processing apparatus coupled to a display device and having at least two RF video inputs couplable to a source of television signals, the video processing apparatus comprising:
 - 25 means for selecting one of the RF video inputs as a television signal source for processing;
 - means for detecting available channels from only the RF video input selected by the means for selecting; and
 - means for updating a channel list of channels available for the selected RF
 - 30 video input.

6. The video processing apparatus of claim 5, wherein the means for detecting available channels comprises detecting only digital channels.

7. The video processing apparatus of claim 5, further including:

means for utilizing information generated from a previous full channel

5 search regarding whether an RF video input is coupled to a cable video signal source or an antenna video signal source in order to skip a cable/air detection routine.

8. The video processing apparatus of claim 5, further including:

means for utilizing information entered by a user regarding whether an RF

10 video input is coupled to a cable video signal source or an antenna video signal source in order to skip a cable/air detection routine.

9. A video processing apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a first plurality of channels of television signals from a first television signal input;

15 means for receiving a second plurality of channels of television signals from a second television signal input;

means for displaying the plurality of channels of television signals from either the first and second television signal inputs;

means for selecting one of the first and second television signal inputs for
20 processing and display;

means for detecting available channels from only the selected first or second television signal input selected by the means for selecting; and

means for updating a channel list of channels available for the selected television signal input.

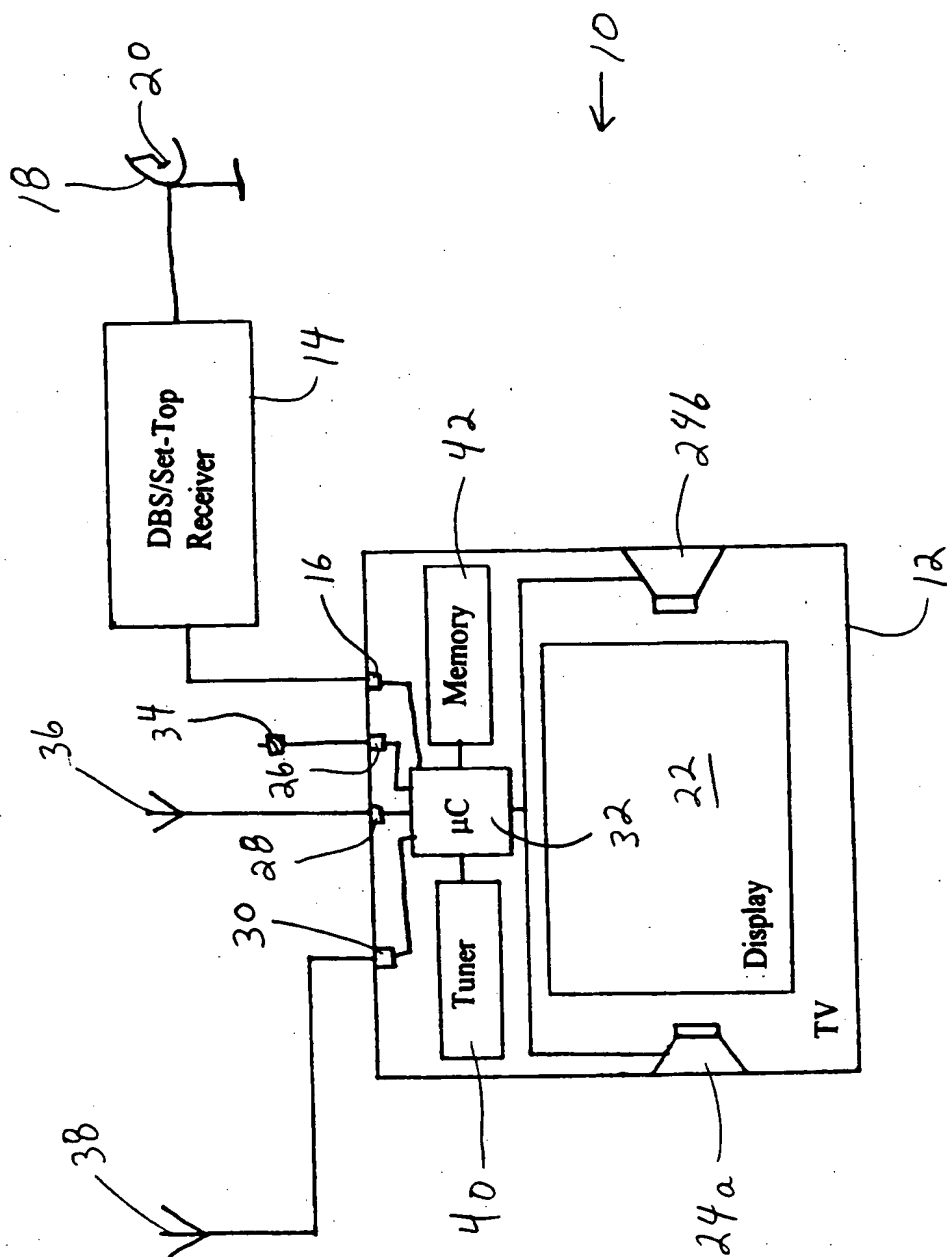
25 10. The video processing apparatus of claim 9, wherein the means for detecting available channels comprises detecting only digital channels.

11. The video processing apparatus of claim 9, further including:

means for utilizing information generated from a previous full channel search regarding whether a television signal input is coupled to a cable video

30 signal source or an antenna video signal source in order to skip a cable/air detection routine.

-
12. The video processing apparatus of claim 9, further including:
means for utilizing information entered by a user regarding whether a television signal input is coupled to a cable video signal source or an antenna video signal source in order to skip a cable/air detection routine.

**Fig. 1**

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 00/17374

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 H04N5/445 H04N5/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 H04N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X A	WO 99 16247 A (SARNOFF CORP) 1 April 1999 (1999-04-01) page 4 -page 17	1,2,5,6, 9,10 3,4,7,8, 11,12
A	WO 99 35833 A (AMIGA DEV LLC) 15 July 1999 (1999-07-15) page 5, line 18 -page 13	1-12
A	US 5 727 060 A (YOUNG PATRICK) 10 March 1998 (1998-03-10) column 6, line 50 -column 27, line 48	1-12
A	US 5 629 733 A (MORRIS MARNEY ET AL) 13 May 1997 (1997-05-13) column 7, line 41 -column 34, line 48	1-12



Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

19 September 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

28/09/2000

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Materne, A

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 00/17374

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 9916247 A	01-04-1999	AU 9585498 A	12-04-1999
		AU 9588198 A	12-04-1999
		AU 9588298 A	12-04-1999
		AU 9670698 A	12-04-1999
		AU 9778898 A	12-04-1999
		EP 1025537 A	09-08-2000
		EP 1025709 A	09-08-2000
		EP 1025697 A	09-08-2000
		EP 1025692 A	09-08-2000
		US 5933195 A	03-08-1999
		US 5987180 A	16-11-1999
		WO 9916011 A	01-04-1999
		WO 9916243 A	01-04-1999
		WO 9916242 A	01-04-1999
		WO 9916012 A	01-04-1999
		WO 9916253 A	01-04-1999
		WO 9916235 A	01-04-1999
WO 9935833 A	15-07-1999	AU 2102999 A	26-07-1999
US 5727060 A	10-03-1998	US 5353121 A	04-10-1994
		US 5151789 A	29-09-1992
		US 5532754 A	02-07-1996
		US 5808608 A	15-09-1998
		AT 191596 T	15-04-2000
		CA 2091160 A	11-03-1992
		DE 69132096 D	11-05-2000
		EP 0548286 A	30-06-1993
		EP 0969662 A	05-01-2000
		ES 2144402 T	16-06-2000
		JP 10208328 A	07-08-1998
		JP 6504165 T	12-05-1994
		WO 9204801 A	19-03-1992
		US 5479268 A	26-12-1995
		US 5790198 A	04-08-1998
		US 5619274 A	08-04-1997
		US 5949954 A	07-09-1999
		US 5479266 A	26-12-1995
		US 5809204 A	15-09-1998
		EP 0500680 A	02-09-1992
		EP 0874524 A	28-10-1998
		WO 9107050 A	16-05-1991
US 5629733 A	13-05-1997	AU 700527 B	07-01-1999
		AU 4502296 A	19-06-1996
		BR 9509826 A	30-09-1997
		CA 2204765 A	06-06-1996
		EP 0806112 A	12-11-1997
		JP 10510120 T	29-09-1998
		WO 9617473 A	06-06-1996